

EBBW FAWR LEARNING COMMUNITY

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Dear Parents & Carers

New Secondary Phase building opens!



was given the honour of cutting the purple ribbon to mark the occasion.

Jack was quickly followed by the remaining students including this group who were keen to impress the photographer!

Ebbw Fawr Director Graeme Harkness said *"Today is a very special day for all concerned, it's been a massive effort by many people to make it happen, we now have one of the very best learning resources in the whole of Wales."*

The building is very different to the type of school parents will have attended, its not a traditional design and has many unique features to aid student learning."

After more than two years in the planning and build stage Ebbw Fawr Learning Community finally moved into their state of the art secondary phase building early in September.

The building hand over completes the £50M+ project which has provided new facilities for both primary and secondary students in Ebbw Vale, coupled with a new special school for Pen y Cwm and an Integrated Children's Centre located in the primary building.

The first student on site that morning was Year 7 student Jack Ewers who



Issue 6

October 2013

Calendar Dates



HALF TERM

Monday 28th October 2013 -
Friday 1st November 2013

PRIMARY PHASE PARENTS' EVENING

Tuesday 19th November 2013

YEAR 8 HPV VACCINE

Wednesday 20th November 2013

YEAR 10 BOOSTER VACCINE

Wednesday 20th November 2013

JOINT CAROL CONCERT CHRISTCHURCH

Thursday 5th December 2013

WINTER SHOWCASE

Tuesday 10th December 2013

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Monday 23rd December 2013 -
Friday 3rd January 2014

MUSIC

The music department are running the following activities during and after school.

MONDAY

School Day

Percussion Lessons
8.20am - 3.10pm

Voice Lessons
8.20am - 3.10pm

Room 153

After School

Percussion Ensemble
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Junior Choir
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Room 152

TUESDAY

School Day

Guitar Lessons
8.20am - 3.10pm

Lower Strings
8.20am - 9.20am

Room 153

After School

Guitar Orchestra
3.00pm - 4.00pm

Senior Choir
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Room 152

WEDNESDAY

School Day

Woodwind Lessons
8.45am - 3.10pm

Room 153

After School

Music Technology KS4
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Room 152

THURSDAY

School Day

Upper String Lessons
9.40am - 3.10pm

Brass Lessons
10.30am - 1.45pm

Room 153

After School

String Ensemble
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Wind Band
3.15pm - 4.15pm

Room 152

Pori Drwy Stori - Rhyme Challenge



Reception children welcomed their parents into school for an afternoon of singing, reciting and fun! The 'Pori Drwy Stori - Rhyme Challenge' programme is funded by WAG and is intended to promote language and literacy development in the early years through rhymes and poems, with an emphasis on home-school links.

However, at Ebbw Fawr, we have decided to take this opportunity to involve parents, grandparents, uncles and aunties in the challenge by inviting everyone into school to join in the fun! The session was very well attended and parents commented on how lovely it

was to see their little ones '...learning in a relaxed and stimulating way', '...I didn't think learning rhymes could be so much fun', and a granddad laughed '...I'll enjoy this every week - brings back so many memories!' Never has 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' been performed with such gusto by all!



Next term, families will receive story bags and books, and in the Summer term, children will be encouraged to 'write' their own books, and take part in the 'Unicorn' numeracy challenge! We look forward to the next few weeks of fun, laughter and learning together!

U13 Netball

Ebbw Fawr U13 netball squad travelled to Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni to challenge them in the 'School Sport Magazine National Schools Netball Cup'. With only 4 schools in Wales qualifying to take part in the cup, it was an excellent opportunity for the girls to experience a very high standard of competitive netball. The girls immediately felt the heat from the opposition as soon as they stepped on court, and it took time to settle into the game. Cwm Rhymni looked very comfortable in the opening exchanges and took advantage with a succession of quick, long balls into the goal attack, and the goals followed. As the game progressed it was evident that the



important thing was to keep the pressure on, to play the game professionally and most importantly to enjoy the occasion. Throughout the game, the girls kept their heads high with a number of turnovers and some great goal scoring opportunities. The final score did not reflect the sheer effort and determination that the Ebbw Fawr girls had displayed. They were very gracious in defeat and even managed to brush up on their key netball phrases in Welsh! Throughout the game, captain Ffion Collins was key in motivating the girls, da iawn merched!!

The squad: Ffion Collins (captain), Sophie Poultney, Lori Bees, Jessica Heath, Tia Cross, Tia Meredith, Becci Harper, Courtney Bailey, Cloe George, Ella Colcombe, Danielle Gagen, Brooke Ratcliffe, Amelia Hill

Out with the Old... In with the New...

Primary phase Eco Warriors have been weeding out the entrance flower containers and planting winter pansies to brighten up the approaching cold winter mornings. Their work was filmed by 'Blaenau Gwent in Bloom' who were very impressed with the children's efforts. Their next project is to re-build the eco greenhouse which suffered from a melting structure in the extreme heat we had this summer! They'll have to carefully consider which materials to use for the re-build. Watch this space!



So what do the parents think...

We recently hosted two open visiting sessions for parents of current and prospective pupils and randomly asked for comments on our new build. Below are typical of the comments made:

"So far from the 'schools' I remember x years ago, the building is true to its name, a place for 'Learning'. We came away thinking that our daughter's future aspirations are truly unlimited and we're motivated to play our part in ensuring she can fulfil them. The people of Blaenau Gwent really should be proud of this facility. I hope there are further opportunities for parents to be a part of the 'Community' and understand how they can help their children. I was pleased to see that the old 'hang-outs' of toilet areas have been redesigned from my days. No more clandestine meeting places!"

Parent Year 7 student

"More IT than Currys, PC World and Amazon put together."

Parent Year 7 student

"I have heard many niggles about the new school and as with all new buildings and changes of any kind there is always room for teething problems. With time and patience I am sure these things can and will be resolved and overall the school is a magnificent building with fantastic facilities for the children to feel comfortable and safe so that they can concentrate on their learning."

I feel the changes in the way the toilets are designed may be very different from what older generations are used to but it is not necessarily wrong for this generation."

Parent Year 7 Student

"What a great, safe, inspiring place for young people to develop into adults. All we need is a safe crossing from the multi story car park and for lazy people to use the car park! Surely the minor inconveniences that change brings are significantly outweighed by the opportunities this wonderful building gives our children?"

Parent Year 7 student

"There have been many opinions circulating the local community about the provision of Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and indeed the opinions of my daughter and her friends have been discussed in detail and at length. When the invitation arrived for the open evening, it was met with curiosity as to what I would find behind the doors."

What struck me more than anything last night was, that considering Ebbw Fawr has been labelled a "Super School" I had entered a building that was filled with warmth and that felt intimate. The warmth came not only in the atmospheric conditions, but from the feel & look of the building itself, from the staff and more importantly from the hundreds of families that were being escorted around by their eager young relatives and new found tour guides. The building itself is state of the art, every detail has been considered to keep our children safe, independent and secure within their learning environment. It encourages transparency & the security of our children. Every class room is open to those that walk past, a brief glance and our children and indeed the teaching staff can be observed at any time. The rest room facilities have an open wash area so that nothing can go on "behind closed doors" that shouldn't. It gives me great comfort that these areas have been carefully considered."

The building layout is clear, logical and colour coded to aid navigation. It's very reassuring to know that my daughter is surrounded by clean modern facilities that will aid her education. Each classroom has an interactive smart board and wi-fi facilities and technology that can only aid learning and development."

Yes, the School may have been a little late opening, yes, the drop off / pick up process is different to what we have experienced before, but all in all I am proud and excited for my daughter and her peers. Ebbw Vale is classed as a deprived area, we now have the facilities that can aid our children and generations to come to improve their educational fulfilment and enable them to reach their potential."

Parent Year 8 student

Shwmae Day



Ebbw Fawr Secondary Phase celebrated Wales' first ever Shwmae Day. Students were encouraged to start Welsh conversations starting with the word 'Shwmae'. Also, during tutor time, students took part in Welsh activities. Many students enjoyed the experience and we look forward to another type of day to celebrate the Welsh language and Culture of Ebbw Fawr.



Year 9 Residential Experience

15 year 9 students attended a residential course at Cardiff Metropolitan University where they experienced the life of a university student. Our 15 students chose their degree subject to study containing theory, practical activities and assessment tasks.



Students from Ebbw Fawr studied Hospitality, Music, Dance, Sport Science, Complimentary Therapies, Computer Science, Bio-Chemistry and Animation. The course gave students a rounded experience in both an educational and social context. They experienced Fresher's Week where they were introduced to students from other schools and current university students. They ended the week with a graduation ceremony for parents, teachers and invited guests from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Pupils who attended the course received their graduation certificates along with the work they had achieved over the course.

Animation = Michael Hammett and Michael Bennett

Bio-Chemistry = Sam Munkley and Ffion Sheldon-Jones

Sport Science= Amelia Page and Chloe Hayward

Dance = Liberty Pennington and Sophie Dowding

Music = Aisha Brown and Jodie Edwards

Complimentary Therapies = Lowri Davies and Chloe Mantle

Hospitality = Jordan Mills

Computer Science = Morgan Angwin

Congratulations to Jackson Page on passing his Grade 1 Drum Kit examination in the Summer Term.



Success in GCSE Mathematics

Congratulations to the following YEAR 11 students who achieved a grade C in mathematics last year.

Emily Atkins	Jodie Beynon	Rebecca Evans	Adele Jones	Corey Morris	Alex Rhead-Williams
Lloyd Bartlett	Benjamin Bowen	Alexander Farr	Tammy Jones	Finley Nash	Dawid Rubasniak
Dominic Bennett	Elise Brain	Lowri Freegard	Tyler Jones	Louis Nicolson	Daniel Sadler
Jodie Beynon	Lucy Bray	Jade Gould	Lucy King	Niamh Palmer	Joe Savage
Benjamin Bowen	Katherine Bruten	Curtis Gregory	Niamh Lawless	Dane Parry	Jack Sewell
Elise Brain	Katie Burchell	Paige Griffiths	Catherine Lynch	Abigail Pennington	Elland Smith
Lucy Bray	Bethan Copner	Joel Harries	Thomas Lynch	Bradley Pettitt	Jacob Smith
Katherine Bruten	Ieuan Jones	Joshua Hodson	Nicholas Malnati	Ethan Phillips	Kiera-Leigh Stevens
Katie Burchell	Samuel Jones	Courtney Hubbucks	Ffion Marshall	Lewys Phillips	Bronwen Thomas
Bethan Copner	Sophie Crewe	Connor Hughes	Charlotte Milton	Jack Powell	Nikita Weaver
Sophie Crewe	Heather Crosby	Sophie Hughes	Liam Moores	Melody Preston	Harri Williams
Heather Crosby	Selina Cross	Connor James	Sophie Morgan	Danielle Pritchard	Kelsey Williams
Dominic Bennett	Connor Davies	Joseph Johnston	Celyn Morgan	Robert Rees	

Ebbw Fawr welcomes HRH The Prince of Wales



Year 8 Football



Year 8 kicked off the new school football season with an impressive performance against King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny.

The game was the first to be played on the 3G pitch and the boys certainly enjoyed competing on this excellent surface which is certainly going to prove conducive to the type of football we want to play.



After suffering only a single defeat in the Cup last season, the team are looking to build on the progress made throughout last year. However, despite starting well the boys fell behind to a goal against the run of play. They continued to aim to keep possession of the ball and work an opening and went close on a number of occasions, only being denied by some excellent goalkeeping and on one occasion the post from a rasping Jack Steele drive. It remained 1-0 at half time. The second half continued in much the same way as the first and there were chances at both ends.

However, it was Ebbw Fawr who grabbed an equaliser from Sam Phillips after some quality link up play between Sam and the impressive Ben Pearce. The equaliser was no more than the boys deserved and further goals quickly followed from Iestyn Gwilliam and Callum Joyce.

Changes were made and King Henry did manage to grab a second, before goals from Liam Davies and a second from Iestyn Gwilliam gave the scoreline a more realistic feel. Mason Bartlett was a dominant figure in goals and both Ieuan Evans and Matthew Pearce were rock solid at the back. Callum Joyce was impressive throughout the game playing out wide and both Sam Phillips and Iestyn Gwilliam linked well up front.

A pleasing start to the new season, with a lot of things to work on ready for the next game against Abertillery.

TeachMeet Event



October 17 saw over 100 teachers from England and Wales come to Ebbw Fawr Learning Community to take part in the biggest ever Teachmeet in Wales. Teachers from both Primary and Secondary Phases came to take part in a celebration of what's best in teaching. There was a focus on 21st Century Learning from the Keynote speaker, Simon Pridham, and this theme continued throughout the night looking at how new technologies can be used to improve learning. Teaching and Learning Director, Saul Graydon, said 'We are delighted to be hosting this event; it shows we are a real 'Learning Community with a commitment to sharing ideas and providing the very best education for all.'

Communities First

Ebbw Fawr Programme

Power Hour
11-16 year olds
Hilltop Log Cabin
Monday 3:30-5:30pm
Cwm Youth Centre
Tuesday 3-5pm

Homework Club

Help & support with your homework
A quiet place to study
Access to computers
Resources available

Starting Monday 30th Sept

For more information contact Steph Watkins 01495 304352

Year 9 Rugby



The Year 9 rugby team kicked off their league season in great form defeating Abertillery Comprehensive School at home 80-0. With an excellent team performance, the result also broke the previous school winning margin record. This result was all the more impressive as no kicks at goal were attempted, 16 tries were scored in total. Try scorers included Cameron Lane 3, Zac Cook 3, Liam Bannister 4.

Red for Racism Workshop

On Monday 30th September Year 8 students took part in Red for Racism workshop.

The aim of the day was to raise awareness of the four areas of racism and to educate students about how to help if they saw someone being the victim of racism. Chris and Aimee the providers, commented on how polite and enthusiastic the students were.

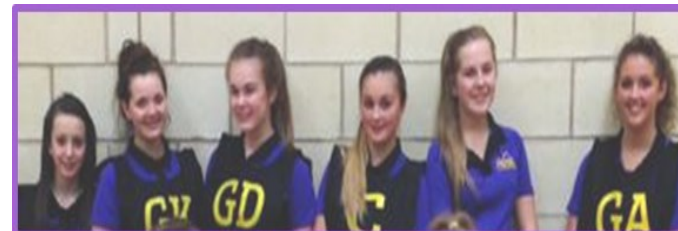
The students thoroughly enjoyed the educational workshop.

County Trials for Ebbw Fawr Netballers!



The U14 and U16 Ebbw Fawr netball girls trained very hard in preparation for the Blaenau Gwent and South East Wales netball trials that have taken place during September and October. Throughout the district over 100 girls were involved in the trials with an impressive total of 14 Ebbw Fawr pupils being selected to represent Blaenau Gwent at the county netball trials on Thursday 26th September (U16s) and Tuesday 1st October (U14s). The county trials have always been held by the Torfaen district at Cwmbran Stadium, but for the first time Blaenau Gwent are leading the way with Ebbw Fawr Learning Community hosting the prestigious event. This was thanks to the strong partnerships between the school, the sports development team and Cath Hares (Sport & Active Living Manager) who requested for the trials to be held at our fantastic new facility. It was a great opportunity to showcase the new leisure centre and raise the profile of standard of excellent netball that is developing in Blaenau Gwent.

U14 Triumph at Netball Trials



(L-R) Kelsie Williams, Keeley Evans, Nia King, Georgia Watkins, Jade O'Keefe, Olivia Hoskins

After being selected from 40 girls to represent Blaenau Gwent, the girls were ready to taste their first experience of competitive county netball. The first game saw a hesitant beginning give way to more attacking, productive play as Nia and Keeley kept the scoring to a minimum for the opposition. Meanwhile, great work through the mid-court from Georgia Watkins and Kelsie provided ample chances for shooters Olivia and Jade. The second game the girls were lucky to capitalise as possession was conceded with simple fouls from their opposition. The swift movement and agility of the Blaenau Gwent team was now starting to shine through and we confidently dominated the first 5 minutes, taking an 5 – 1 lead. An all action game ended in Blaenau Gwent's favour as we controlled the passages of play and forcing mistakes from their opponents. Olivia was finding her shooting range

making shots from the edge of the circle with ease.

During the last two games Nia demonstrated her experience as she controlled the defensive third, calling instructions to her team-mates and forming the well-known and trusted partnership with Keeley. Blaenau Gwent continued to show some flair with Georgia and Kelsie particularly impressing with their passing and Nia battling for every ball that was within five feet of her.

In the final stages of the trials, Georgia and Nia were selected to play again, where they both forced quick decisions which ultimately led to misplaced passes and turnovers. Georgia was selected for the South East Wales squad, a tremendous achievement as once again the standard at the trial was outstanding.

Netball Training



**Tuesdays Year 8
Wednesdays Year 7
Thursdays Year 9,10,11**

3:20pm – 4:30pm

**Want to learn new skills and tactics? Be part of a team?
Improve your fitness?
Play in a competitive county league or local friendlies?
New members welcome! See Mrs Price for further information.**

Sensational six selected for the U16 Blaenau Gwent Netball Squad



Sasha Rossiter, Paige Timothy, Lucy E.Jones, Maria Roskowska, Holly Dobbs, Jodi Beynon, Jade Williams

The girls were very excited and a little nervous as they stepped onto court in Ebbw Fawr colours representing Blaenau Gwent. After 5 minutes of play a goal was still yet to be scored, they realised it was not going to be an easy task. The oppositions defence was tight and Blaenau Gwent struggled to get the ball into the shooters.

The second game saw Jade starting to show her flair with some intricate feeds into Jodi who was in turn finding the net with accuracy. An excellent passage of play saw Blaenau Gwent win the opening minutes of the game 4 – 0. The combinations continued to work across the court with Paige, Holly and Lucy defensively tight.

Their confidence continued to grow in the closing games as they came out stronger with a much tighter attacking unit making it easier to find Jodi and Sasha in the circle, where the goals flowed as a result. Lucy and Maria worked hard to gain turnover balls and the team worked together beautifully to make sure it was converted.

All of the girls were a credit to Ebbw Fawr as the standard of court play was fantastic. Jodi was identified within the team and went through to the final stages of the trial, however, unfortunately she was not selected for the county squad. The many positives that could be taken from this trial were the smooth passing and movement throughout the court, the versatility of the mid-court and that all players were given exposure to represent Ebbw Fawr and Blaenau Gwent in a competitive environment right on our doorstep.

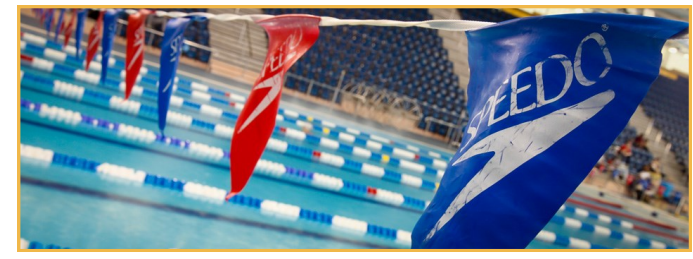
Attendance Reminder

Leave of absence in term time



We have been asked to remind parents that leave of absence is not a parental right and Blaenau Gwent Local Education Authority has made the decision not to authorise any holidays in term time. As a result any parents taking their child on holidays during term time face the possibility of statutory action being taken. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. It is essential that parents maximise the educational opportunities available for their children and provide the best possible start in life.

Swimming news...



Many congratulations to Amy Richards on her recent success in swimming. Amy recently swam in the ASA British National Championships in Sheffield. On her return from there she headed to Swansea competing in the Welsh National Championships where she swam the 400m free style taking gold. Amy also swam in the final of the 200m butterfly taking another gold medal, breaking the Welsh championship record by 4 seconds achieving a time of 2.29.21. On the back of these outstanding achievements Amy has been selected to train with the Welsh regional squad in half term and will be competing in Europe with the team next year.

GCSE Success



66% of students achieved 5+ A*- C and 92% of students achieved 5+ A* - G grades. The foundations for success next year have already been laid with a number of current Year 11 students also achieving an excellent set of results. We look forward to their results this summer.

Congratulations to our first cohort of Year 11 students who achieved excellent results this August. 44% of students achieved 5+ A* - C GCSE grades including English and Mathematics. The previous year's combined scores for the two Ebbw Vale secondary schools that closed was 39% and the result was above the schools externally set target.



Communities First

Ebbw Fawr

Breakfast Club

FREE

Come along and enjoy a healthy nutritional breakfast plus Free transport is provided to school.

Mondays & Fridays
7am – 8.15am
Hilltop Log cabin

Breakfast clubs can have a positive impact on school attendance.

Support from a Youth Activity Officer. Training and workshops available.

For more information contact Nicola Dobbs on (01495) 304352 or email nicola.dobbs@gavowales.org.uk

12 -14 year olds

100% Attendance = Free Ice Skating



We have teamed up with the Planet Ice skating rink in Cardiff Bay to celebrate children who achieve 100%.

Any child who attends school for every session in the Autumn, Spring or Summer terms will receive a family ticket for up to four people to skate for free.

As this is a termly challenge, there are three chances during the year to win.



Governors feedback on lunch-break...

Due to a number of queries regarding lunch breaks from parents to the Governing Body, this issue was discussed at length at the last Governor's meeting. A Task and Finish Group was established to observe lunch at the Secondary Phase to gain first hand experience and provide constructive feedback to the Senior Leadership Team and parents.

Myself and Mrs O'Neill who is a Teacher Governor attended lunch for one hour and observed years 7 – 11. We observed the Restaurant and Street area throughout this time.

We were fortunate that Mr Collins was able to provide us with a background of the situation to date and the changes that had already been made to ensure that the lunch break ran more smoothly.

- There were a number of recommendations that were made as a result of the visit.
- There were a number of students who attempted to pay with cash and we have asked that the process of cashless catering is reinforced through the newsletter and through form groups.
- The Street area was congested throughout the visit and

therefore we have recommended that queuing barriers are installed to ensure that there is an orderly queue and students are served as soon as possible.

- The demand seems to be for cold food and grab and go dishes. We have asked that all food is pre-packed in the Street area and that the catering staff provide a multifunctional role across hot and cold server's to ensure that pupils are served as soon as possible.
- We have requested that a survey is undertaken through the mechanism of Student Voice to consult with the students regarding lunch break. We observed lunch on a fine day and although I did not witness many students outside, we have asked to return on a rainy day to address if there is any other impact.

There has already been a number of significant changes which have improved the situation in relation to lunch and as a Governing Body we will provide further feedback as it becomes available.

Mrs Collins Community Governor, Mrs O'Neill Teacher Governor

Could you be our next Governor?

School governors have overall responsibility for the conduct of their school and within that particular responsibilities to promote high standards of education and the welfare of students. All of this is contained in a legal framework. Being a governor is both rewarding and challenging and requires commitment to attend meetings and fully participate in the life of the school.

A governor is someone who:-

- is a volunteer;
- cares about teaching, learning and children;
- represents those people with a key interest in the school, including parents, staff, the local community and the LEA;
- is part of a team which accepts responsibility for everything a school does;
- has time to commit to meetings and other occasions when needed;
- is willing to learn;
- is able to act as a friend who supports the school but is still able to cast a critical eye upon how the school works and the standard it achieves;

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community is now **seeking five nominations** for Community Governors to join its experienced Governing Body . Community Governors are invited by other governors to join the governing body and are appointed by the governing body. Community members bring their own experience or skills to the governing body and can act as a link with the community in which the school serves. Community governors usually live or work in the community of the school area and are committed to the good government and success of the school.

If you are interested please send a letter outlining the experience you offer, in no more than 300 words to Marie Anderson, Clerk to Governors. Applications can be left at either phase marked for Mrs Andersons attention. Should you wish to have a confidential discussion on any aspect of the role please contact Graeme Harkness on 354690. Applications close at 4.00pm on Wednesday 13th November 2013.